



# OPENING DOORS<sup>sm</sup>

A Prison Ministry

February 2006

## I Have Placed Before You An Open Door (Rev. 3:8)

A word from Deborah L. Roeger, Executive Director



For the past several month's we've shared stories about the impact of the work we have been called to do with Ohio offenders and their families. This month we will

focus on what we actually do. The entire Newsletter is written to help you understand more about the work done inside and outside Ohio prisons by Opening Doors. If you have been on this journey with us since our first Newsletter, you already know a little of the story about how our work began. If you missed that story, you can find the September, 2005 Newsletter on our website at [www.OpeningMoreDoors.org](http://www.OpeningMoreDoors.org) along with all our other past newsletters. As you read about our work this month, will you open your heart, listen intently to the Lord's voice and ask how He might connect you in even greater ways to help us Open More Doors for those we serve? ♥

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## A Proper Foundation

The work of Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> begins on a foundation of prayer. We continue to look for more & more prayer partners to support this vitally important part of the work God has called us to do.

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### Prayers for Prisoners<sup>sm</sup>

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A powerful prayer web is being woven across the State by taking individual prayer requests from inside the prison to outside churches and prayer ministries. In the near future we plan to be able to take prayer requests from participating churches around the state and give them to inmate intercessors inside the prisons.

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### Intercessory prayer inside the prison

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Opportunities exist for a unique and powerful prayer experience inside the Ohio prisons. The uniqueness of these prayer teams is the fact that Christian inmates, Christian staff and Christians from the outside faith community are invited to meet together for prayer. The involved institutions, which now includes Scioto Juvenile Correctional facility, set the schedule for these vital prayer gatherings. If you would like attend, please contact us for more information or watch our website for coming details. ♥

## Where Does Your Heart Connect?

### Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> programs are offered to:

- \* male and female adult offenders
- \* male and female juvenile offenders (coming soon)
- \* prison staff

**Opening Doors In The Family<sup>sm</sup>** prepares offenders and family members to work with a qualified family mediator to rebuild healthy family communications.

**Stand In The Gap,<sup>tm</sup> Ohio**, a ministry of Opening Doors, is a unique mentoring model that surrounds an ex-offender with a strong support system for successful reentry.

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## TEACHING SKILLS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT

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### Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> For Offenders

The Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> program uses a creative, interactive learning curriculum that is facilitated by volunteers inside the prisons with adult and juvenile offenders. A foundational principle of this ministry is the reality that: *“People don’t care how much we know until they know how much we care.”* The outside volunteer heart filled with God’s love best demonstrates this caring attitude that makes a profound difference in the life of another. Program participation is voluntary and is open to offenders without regard to faith beliefs or practices.

Each program focuses on:

- ✓ Encouraging personal growth
- ✓ Building community & trust
- ✓ Conflict resolution skills
- ✓ Listening & communication skills
- ✓ Learning to “think about what we think about”
- ✓ The gift of laughter

- ✓ Recognizing the value of personal choices
- ✓ Understanding the “law of use”

### Opening Doors In The Workplace<sup>sm</sup>

This workplace program is a highly interactive curriculum facilitated for prison staff emphasizing workplace conflict resolution and team building. Its principles are similar to those which support the Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> offender program.

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## STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY

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Opening Doors In The Family<sup>sm</sup> uses qualified family mediators to rebuild fractured communication between offenders and their families. For the past 5 years, Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> participants have asked us to do more. In the near future, offenders who have completed the 3-day program will be asked if they want to work on strengthening family relationships. If they do, we plan to combine Interactive Journaling® with relationship skill-building curriculum to prepare offenders and family members to begin their work with a mediator. While Christian family mediators are highly encouraged, the ministry will not exclusively use faith-based mediators and the service will be provided to offenders without regard to faith beliefs or practices. The plan is to make mediators available at no cost to qualified offenders who complete the Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> program and the preparatory work for mediation. As a result, we are actively seeking funding to begin this work in the prisons.

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## EX-OFFENDERS COMING HOME TO STAY

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In its reentry ministry, Opening Doors has embraced the Stand In The Gap<sup>tm</sup> model to support ex-offenders. This highly effective mentoring model surrounds one ex-offender with

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## Opening God's Word

### ***Taste of Freedom***

*“Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring... the news of the boundless riches of Christ” Eph.3:8*

On September 30, 2000 I gave my life to the Lord Christ Jesus and it has not been the same since. That evening was the first time that I actually felt Freedom. I can only tell you that I felt an overwhelming sensation deep within my soul that I **knew** was from God. I made a covenant with God and He has been blessing my life ever since. To God be all glory!

The Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> program was the other time that I can report that same sense of Freedom. At first I thought that it was silly that grown men were asked to partake in childish games, but it did not take long before I noticed that I had lost track of being inside of prison. I actually felt “outside” of these walls for a couple of days. It was a tremendous experience after nearly 20 years inside. This was a “Taste of Freedom.” Through the activities we were able to look deep inside ourselves and see all the raw sewage that we had been building up for so long. For me nothing had worked for uncovering that place inside of me.

Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> has been responsible for allowing me to look at other people as children of God and to treat them with the same love that I have for my family. The other part of that three day experience was that I was able to find a way to forgive myself, not an easy thing to do. Our wonderful God always finds avenues for us to travel and assures us that we are not alone! Jesus travels with us!

The Scripture reading from Ephesians speaks to us as we struggle to understand God and His Word. Being a follower of Christ Jesus can be difficult at times; however, it is in those times

when all that I have learned in Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> comes into play. The Holy Spirit revealed those lessons too and imbedded them deep within me until such a time that I need something to combat the vices of the devil and his cronies. Thank God for His Word and His faithfulness to His children.

– Donato Lombardoizzi

#### **Scripture References:**

Psalm 72 Isaiah 60:1-6, 9 Ephesians 3:1-12  
Matthew 2:1-12

**Reflective Questions:** *When did you first feel the Freedom that comes from knowing Him? Are you walking in that Freedom today?*

**About the Author:** Don is a past graduate of the pilot Opening Doors program in April, 2001 and has been a frequent facilitator of Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> programs at Marion Correctional. He is a Kairos graduate, a graduate of the Horizon Interfaith Dorm and he has served on Kairos Torch Teams. He feels called by God to take correspondence classes from Moody Bible Institute and to be a discipler in “Discipling Another To Love Jesus” (DA2LJ) at MCI. Don works with the Prison News Network Department at MCI as video coordinator, videographer and editor. Opening Doors has greatly benefited from his talents and his incredibly humble heart to serve others. Our hearts are warmed to know him as another one of our true brothers in Christ.

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## OPENING DOORS<sup>SM</sup> VISION

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By creating effective partnerships with the faith community, the prisons, the corporate community and others, the vision of Opening Doors is to help those impacted by incarceration build healthier relationships resulting in strengthened families, steady post-release employment, reduced recidivism and restored communities.

**PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- † Our first 3 Stand In The Gap,<sup>tm</sup> Ohio (SITG) spiritual families
- † Opening Doors In The Family<sup>sm</sup>
- † SITG<sup>tm</sup> Program Director
- † Opening Doors<sup>sm</sup> Program Dir.
- † Contractual relationships with licensed Christian counselors to support SITG<sup>tm</sup>
- † Corporate partnerships
- † Expanding prison prayer teams & Prayers For Prisoners<sup>sm</sup>
- † New Funding Sources

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a spiritual family of 6-8 volunteers from the church. The covenant relationship of the family is guided by lay-leaders and supported by a Christian counselor. We welcome our new partners at WellSpring Counseling (a division of Central Ohio Youth For Christ) under the leadership of its Director, Robert Uhle MA, LPCC, SC, LSW to provide these services. Already Pat Scholz, PC (Columbus area) has answered God's call to provide such services to SITG,<sup>TM</sup> Ohio. The basis of this unique mentoring model is Christian fellowship and prayer. As a result, the ministry is limited to prescreened Christian ex-offenders and their families. ♥

**There are almost 48,000 men, women and kids incarcerated inside Ohio adult and juvenile prisons. Approximately one-half of them will be released this year. Who will help them get ready and then be there for them when they come home?**

**HEARING FROM YOU**

Because we believe good stewardship of our resources is important, please inform us should you decide you want to receive future Newsletters by e-mail. For those who no longer want to receive our Newsletter, we will honor your request by removing your name from our mailing list.

*Deborah L. Roeger,*  
 Executive Director

**Watch the development of our website:**  
[www.openingmoredoors.org](http://www.openingmoredoors.org)  
 This project is now being completed by award-winning web designer Jon Davis, Ingensis Ltd. using funds from our 2005 Ohio Compassion Capital Grant.

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